

**ABSTRACT****THESIS:** Mechanics of a Marriage**STUDENT:** Jill A. Emerick**DEGREE:** Master of Arts, English (Creative Writing)**COLLEGE:** Sciences and Humanities**DATE:** May, 2011**PAGES:** 85

This work of creative nonfiction explores my marriage. Joe and I have been married for three and a half years, and though we differ in hobbies, interests, and ways of relating to people, our marriage mysteriously works. How is this? I explore his fearlessness and goal-driven personality juxtaposed against my fearfulness and cautious disposition. He enjoys cars and engines, but I'm often afraid of them. He's a blue-collar mechanic; I'm a teacher. I like books, and he likes video games. How do we mesh? How is our marriage different from our parents' marriages? What is it that makes our marriage, or any marriage, work?

These are questions I explore through scenes, letters, lists, and musings. I portray the ways we come together and pull apart, how we have enriched and depleted each other, and how love works in day-to-day life.

Abigail Thomas's Safekeeping and Peggy Shumaker's Just Breathe Normally serve as inspirations in form as I aim for short, dense essays. I admire John D'Agata's Halls of Fame for its use of collage. As I allow for differing lengths and forms of essays, I seek to keep them unified in tone, language, and imagery.